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EOARD

**SUPER-FAST INTELLIGENT TARGET EVALUATION
(SITE)**

FINAL REPORT

Feasibility study and R&D program

SPC 99-4083
Contract order number: F 61775-99-WE083
Dept. Air Force, European Office of Aerospace Research and Development (EOARD)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. <i>Executive Summary</i>	3
2. <i>Introduction</i>	4
3. <i>Target Specification</i>	5
4. <i>Proposed Architecture</i>	6
5. <i>Required Technologies and Their Approximate Specifications</i>	10
6. <i>Work Plan, Phases and Contributing Parties</i>	14
7. <i>References</i>	16

Appendix

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recently, dramatic failures in military and industry have proved the *vulnerability* of *present day sensor-computer technologies*. In spite of witnessing the sensor-revolution in these days, the integration of multimodal sensor arrays and computers are in their infancy.

In this project, following successful theoretical and experimental work on a new computer paradigm, called *analogic cellular (CNN) computers* and related technologies, a major effort is planned to achieve a new level of quality and computing power in the sensor computer arena. By doing this, a major bottleneck, built into any existing high speed target recognition and tracking system, is removed. This bottleneck is the separation of sensing and computing due to the analog sensing and digital processing. In our new sensor-computer framework a genuine dynamic interaction of the two processes is integrated, like in the most successful living creatures. Analogic means: combining analog array dynamics and logic.

Analogic cellular computers has become recently not only of theoretical interest and a neuromorphic modeling tool. The measured TeraOPS computing power, in a focal plane CNN Universal Machine chip with 4096 processors using a conservative 0.5 micron standard CMOS technology, on 1 cm² at 1W, manifested a beginning of a new era in sensory array computers. In addition, a target detection experiment with a breathtaking 10, 000 frames per second has been achieved during the last few weeks using these chips in a test system.

Meanwhile, breakthroughs have been witnessed in the following connecting areas:

- Deep submicron mixed mode CMOS design with visible wavelength sensors
- MEMS type long wave IR sensor arrays
- Vertical packaging of VLSI chips and various new lens technologies
- Spatio-temporal analogic computing with adaptation and learning
- Efficient computational infrastructure for analogic hardware/software systems integration

The goal of the present project is to make a Super-fast Intelligent Target Evaluation (SITE) unit by exploiting the synergy of all the above mentioned technologies, leading to a *walkman-size, programmably-adaptive, multisensor supercomputer*. This unit is differing dramatically from any presently known technologies and offering about 3 orders of magnitude speed/size/ or power consumption advantages providing a new generation of cheap mission critical devices. These devices, with about *50 to 100 TeraOps speed*, will achieve *context and content dependent, dynamic, target detecting and tracking*, leading to a new generation of equipments and methodologies.

The R&D program of the next Phase II has two parts. Phase IIA will implement the new concept by integrating the upgraded existing technologies and pursue research to explore more advanced properties, synergies, and application areas, including airborne and other mission critical testing. Phase IIB will integrate the advanced research results of Phase IIA in a vertically integrated system.

2. INTRODUCTION

Since a few years, a new computing technology has been emerging, drastically different from any previous one. Its elementary instructions are analog spatio-temporal waves combined with logic, the processor array is fully parallel, hence, it is also called *analogic cellular (CNN) computer*. Since the elementary instructions are the ones most difficult to implement on any digital computer, solving a nonlinear PDE on a finite grid, doubts have been always present about the feasibility of physical implementation of this revolutionary technology.

In December 2000, in Washington DC, during a Technology Assessment Meeting organized by ONR and other agencies, the proof of concept was put on the table: complex tasks were solved by an analogic 4096 processor chip 8000 time faster than by a Pentium II machine with a fraction of size and power dissipation. Moreover, very high speed target detection can now be demonstrated with 10, 000 frame per second.

The original ideas had been invented in Berkeley [1-4] and the new chips and computing infrastructure have been developed in Seville [7-9] and Budapest [5, 16], in a collaborative effort of the three groups.

The new computing paradigm is especially efficient in sensor computers [5] where on-chip sensors are dynamically interacting with on chip analogic array computers. The first experimental focal plane analogic computers show unprecedented computing power (TeraOPS) and algorithmic flexibility.

The aim of the present project to make research and experimental efforts to test the ultimate limits of present day and future technologies in achieving Superfast Intelligent Target Evaluation (SITE). The main areas of R&D are as follows.

- Deep submicron mixed mode analogic cellular array computer chips with on chip adaptive sensors.
- Long wave IR sensors to be mounted on the analogic cellular computer CMOS chips.
- Vertical and other packaging technologies to make the sensor supercomputers smaller

- Physical integration, including various lens technologies to explore additional capabilities
- Analogic and standard Software R&D and integration for solving complex target detection and tracking problems
- Functional system integration techniques to make airborne and on site units and to test them in mission critical real life situations

This is a typical dual- or multi-use technology. Besides the mission critical applications, medical, industrial, security and many other fields would gain a lot.

3. TARGET SPECIFICATION

The Super-fast Intelligent Target Evaluation (SITE) system represents the presently available ultimate speed-power-area performance of multi-modal sensor supercomputers in a camera size unit.

The estimated maximum computing power is about 50- 100 TeraOPS.

The maximum frame rate for target detection is about 50, 000 frames per second.

The maximum pixel resolution is about 0.25 million pixels depending on the frame rate.

Most of the building blocks of the system have been tested in details, although not at the targeted complexity and scale, and not in this system configuration.

The architecture is based on an advanced version of a new *Analogic Cellular* (CNN) *Computer* paradigm and relies on the CNN Universal Machine (CNN-UM) architecture. Its extended, adaptive cells are used to integrate multi-modal sensory and computing arrays. Dynamic intelligence is achieved in an unparalleled way and technology.

To make this system a reality, that is a prototype, a focused and organized R&D is needed in all the relevant areas:

1. Deep submicron (~0.18 micron) mixed mode CMOS design and processing
2. Microsensor and MEMS arrays for multispectral light (visible, IR, LWIR, *etc.*)
3. Vertical packaging with internal vias and/or MCM technology
4. System integration on the physical level, including various lens technologies
5. Analogic software R&D for sensor-computers and software integration
6. System integration on the functional level and mission critical testing

The synergy of these areas would lead to a new quality and a new class of technical specifications in general, making possible to directly integrate sensing and computing as well as spatio-temporal flow-control for extremely complex target tracking problems.

4. PROPOSED ARCHITECTURE

The input module of a SITE system contains a Multi-modal Microsensor Array (MMA). This is an array of cells, each of which contains several sensor elements for detecting different sensory modalities. The simplest one is a color camera. “Color” may mean various sensors and filters for different spectra, polarization, sensitivity, and speed. The local sensitivity of each sensor could be controlled depending on the local features of pre-processed images. Hence, sensing and processing/computing is integrated in the input module.

A cell in the input module is shown in Fig. 1. The local intensity of the sensor is controlled either by a signal coming from the sensor cell or from the subsequent layer: a simple Analogic Cellular (CNN) Computing chip (ACC).

The extended cell of the input module consists of a very simple CNN cell, some local analog memory (LAM), local logic memory (LLM), as well as a local switching unit (LSU), and a local analogic control unit (LACU). The sensitivity/gain of each sensory cell can be controlled by a control signal v_1, v_2, \dots, v_N and the cell outputs y_1, y_2, \dots, y_N are either stored locally in LAM or LLM or they are sent to the subsequent layer. The signals v_1, v_2, \dots, v_N are coming either from the LACU or from the subsequent layer. This extended cell implements just a few CNN templates: the goal is to adjust the sensors and possibly to detect the region of interest (ROI).

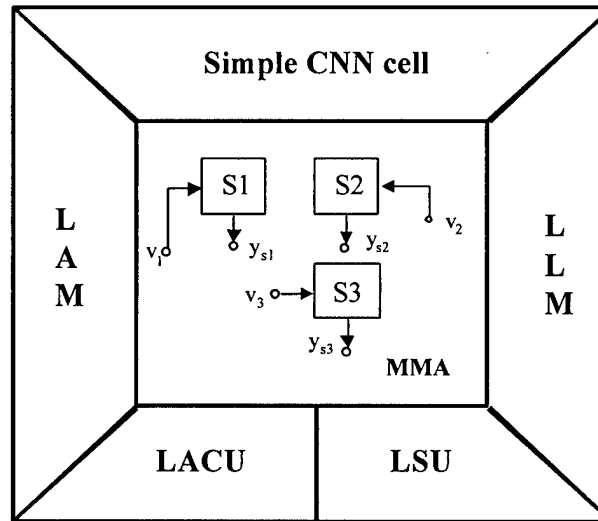


Figure 1 A schematic of an input module cell with 3 sensors. S_1 - S_3 are the sensors with sensitivity/gain control through signals v_1 - v_3 and output signals y_1 - y_3 .

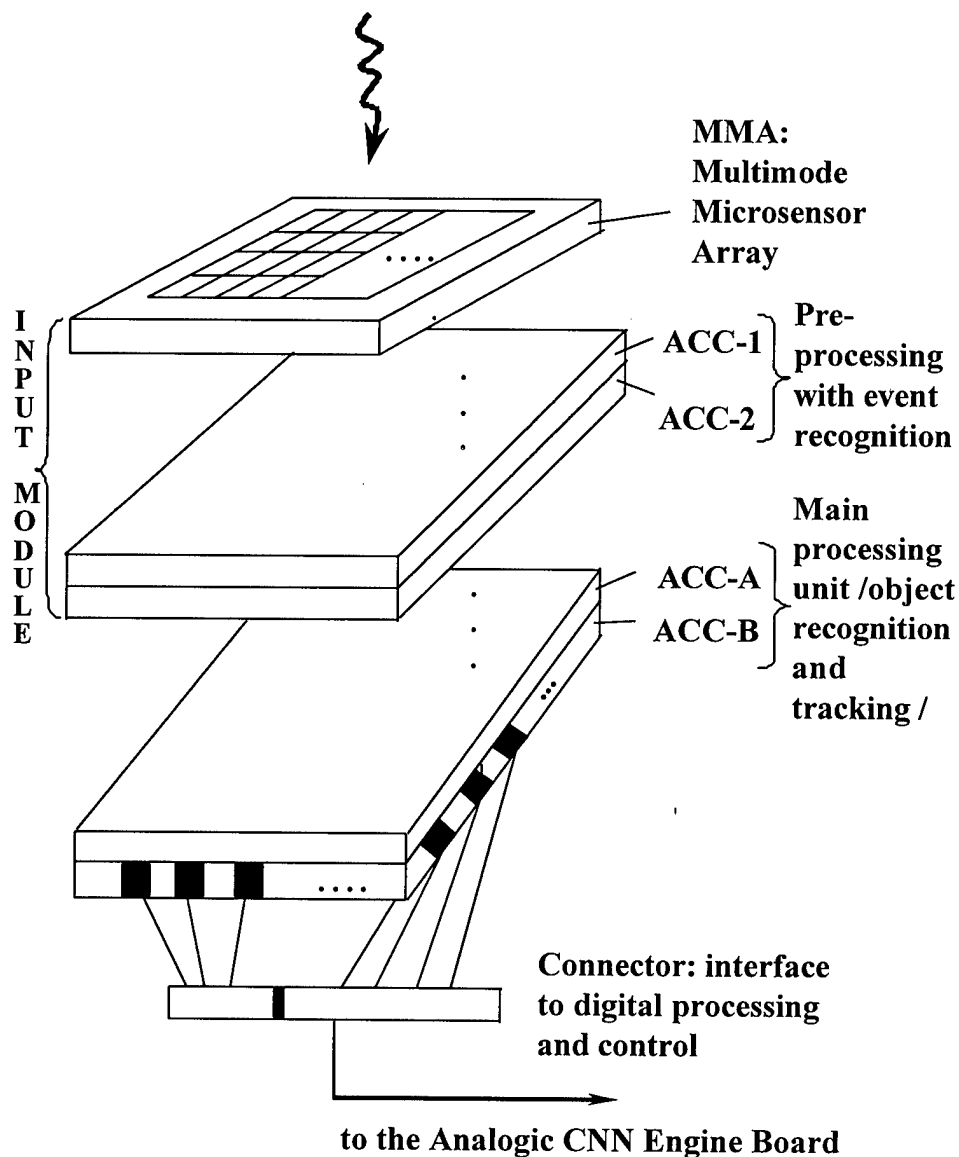
Following the input module, the next few layers/chips perform the more sophisticated processing tasks. Two main versions of SITE units are to be developed. Sketches of one

specific version of each phases, SITE-1 and SITE-2, with the main components are shown in Fig. 2 and 3, respectively.

SITE-1 is a single module version without or with modest 3D packaging.

SITE-2 is a multi-chip unit with 3 D packaging and or MCM technology.

In both cases, the sensory array is integrated in different ways, using different vertical integration technologies.



ACC: Analogic Cellular (CNN) Computer chip

Figure 2 SITE-1: a single module version.

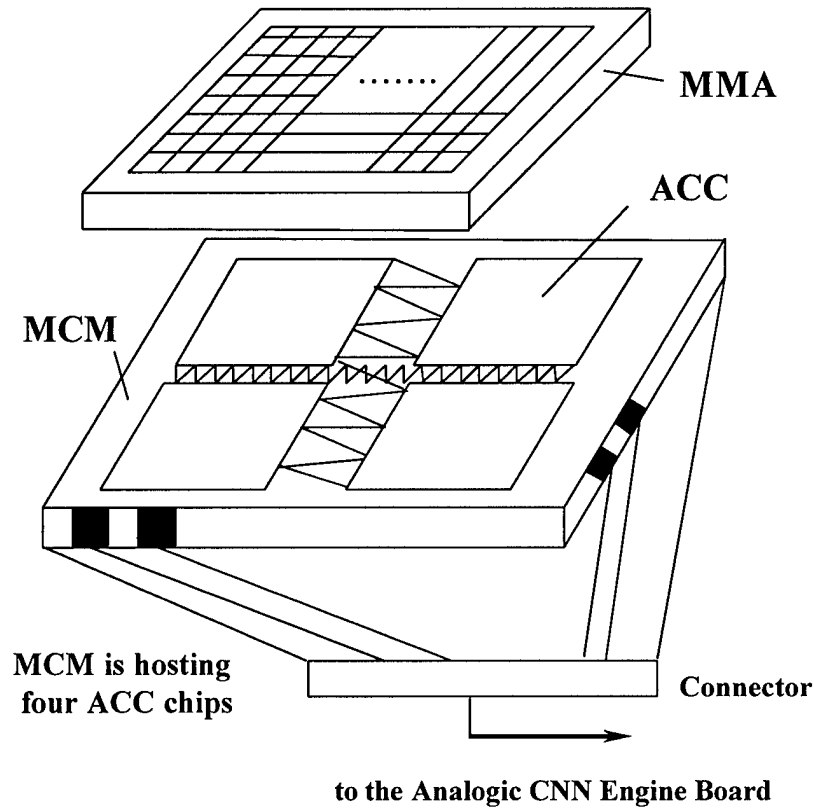


Figure 3 SITE-2: a multi chip module version.

A single cell processor of the Analogic Cellular (CNN) Computer chip (ACC) main processing unit is shown in Fig. 4. This may be a complex cell, a cell of a multi layer CNN-UM architecture with local adaptation, consisting of the following main parts:

- Connections from input module
- Extended cells
- Template adaptation via TCM
- Template plasticity via potentiation circuits and TCS

Template adaptation is generally used in the input module. The sensor parameters of the Multi-modal Micro-sensor Array (MMA) can be tuned, adapted, based on the local content of the scene, including the range of the sensed signal. Moreover, sensors can be tuned to be speed sensitive, depending on the rate of change of the signals.

Template plasticity is achieved via the properties of a sequence of frames based on some plasticity rules. These potentiation rules are well known in living systems. We have identified some of them recently, and we have to explore them for our artificial systems.

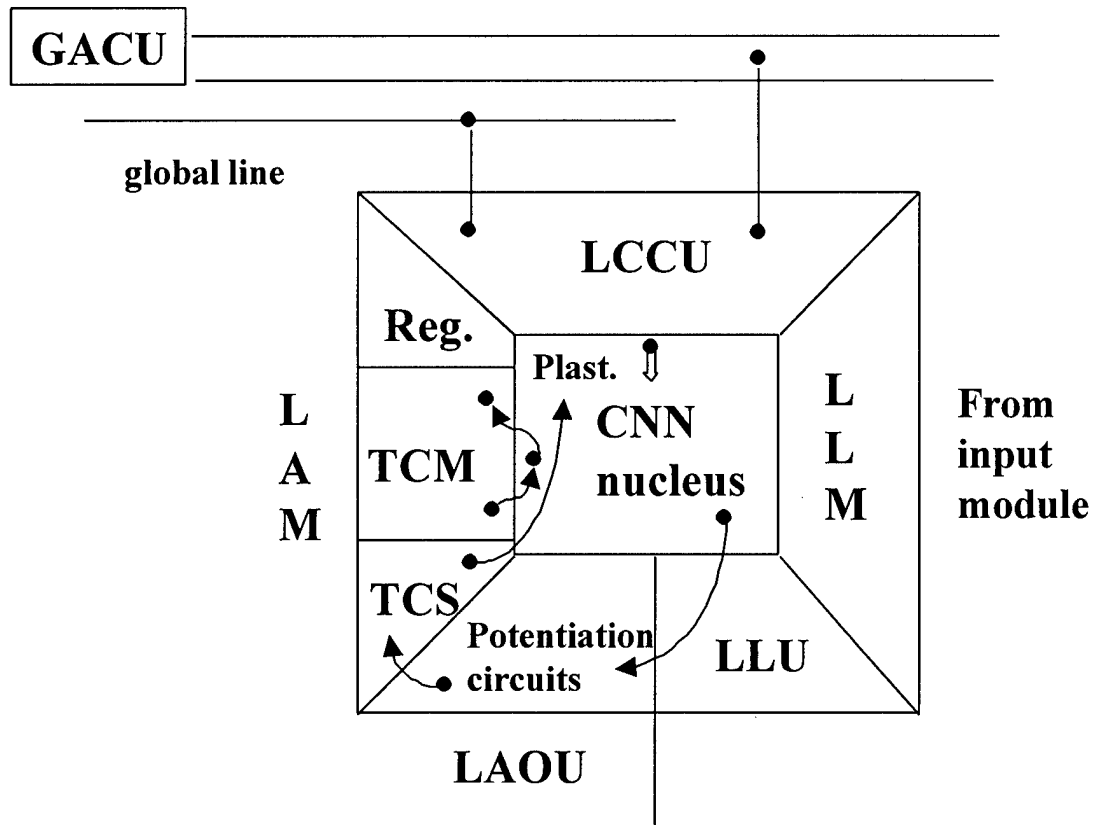


Figure 4 An adaptive extended cell processor.

The main parts of the LAM and the main adaptation mechanisms in the adaptive extended cell are as follows.

- GACU - Global Analogic Control Unit
- LCCU - Local Control and Communication Unit
- LAM - Local Analog Memory
- LLM - Local Logical Memory
- LLU - Local Logical Unit
- LAOU - Local Analog Output Unit
- TCM - Template Control Memory
- TCS - Template Control Signal

The functional diagram of the SITE-1 unit is shown in Fig. 5. Whether using sensorial layers, complex cells, spatio-temporal time sharing in a stored program, or combining them, depend on the complexity of the task.

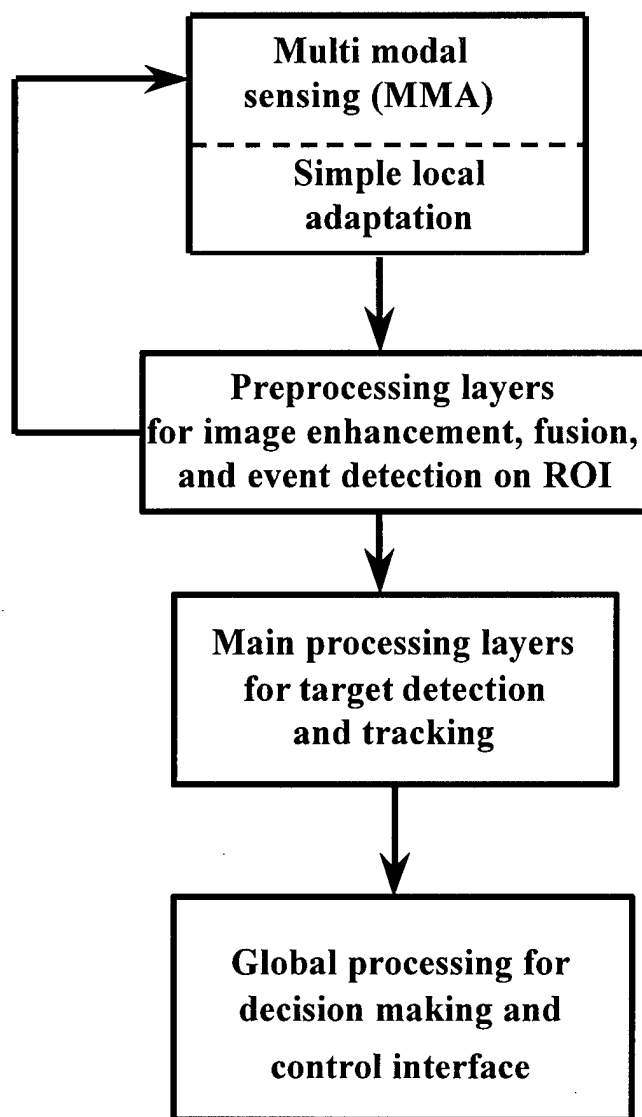


Figure 5 The functional block diagram of a SITE-1 or SITE-2 unit

The global processing unit is implemented by a high-end DSP with interface circuits for control functions.

5. REQUIRED TECHNOLOGIES AND THEIR APPROXIMATE SPECIFICATIONS

The target technical specifications for the different technologies are as follows:

5.1 CMOS chip technology with 0.25 and 0.18 micron, double supply voltage (analog or high speed digital and low power logic), single poly, and about 8 metal layers.

In this part of the project, a major step is planned in mixed mode CMOS design going down to the 0.25 micron technology as well as making some 0.18 micron experiments.

In the first case a 256x256 CNN-UM chip is planned with extended cells to make some local adaptation and control to the sensors.

In the second case, experimental cells with 0.18 micron technology will be designed with focal plane adaptive sensors. Later, a complete array with possible 300x400 cell processors are to be designed.

Interfaces to the LWIR sensors will be studied and developed.

The Seville group is the most competitive in this field worldwide.

5.2 Sensor technology on silicon including normal wavelength, NIR, LWIR, I^2 , and possible polarized light, with possible fixed template and/or adaptive CNN preprocessing. This is a new direction with a lot of new challenges, described as follows.

The most important advances in the field of IR uncooled detector have been achieved on the side of thermal detectors [16], [17]. Micromachining techniques allowed realizing detector of small size (50 μ m) and less with low thermal capacity and large thermal insulation. Several types of thermal detectors operating at room temperature have been realized recently. The focal Plane Array (FPA) developed by Honeywell [18], which is, uncooled FPA operating in the range of 8-12 μ m range is basically a thermally modulated resistor.

Depending on the technology used for integrating the detector with the readout electronics, FPA can be either hybrid or monolithic.

Monolithic arrays for example the Honeywell is obtained by directly preparing the detector and the readout circuit on the same substrate. The FPA microbolometers developed by Honeywell realize large array (240x336) sensors operating at room temperature. Active element is made of Vanadium Oxide. The FPA readout circuit is at 30HZ. It can detect temp. Difference of 0.1K between two elements of the scene. It is integrated with CMOS circuits. The main disadvantage of using Vanadium Oxide is that it is not standard material in IC technology, and it requires special process optimization to obtain the desired activation energy, resistivity and noise. As we see, it is very possible to integrate such sensor with the CNN chip. The main problem would be to optimize such device to the CNN and the bolometer requirement.

The main objectives of the design of optimized bolometer are:

1. Low noise equivalent temperature difference lower than 100mk at a frame rate of 30HZ
2. Material must be compatible with standard CMOS process

3. The material does not require a special process setup as in the case of Vanadium Oxide. Moreover, its characteristics can be easily reproduced
4. The complete process of the bolometer must be performed with thermal budget implied by standard CMOS

Recently a Polycrystalline Silicon Germanium (Poly Si Ge) alloy was proposed as a new material for IR bolometers [19]. Any bolometer material should have high TCR and low $1/f$ noise. The request for low thermal conductance also influences the choice of the material. Thermal insulation can be achieved either by micromachining suspended membrane or by deposition of active element on top of thermally insulating membrane.

The GWU group has a good experience in designing thermally insulating structure that is designing membrane suspended on top of CMOS structure. We are not sure about the characteristics needed and the material most suitable for your sensor requirements. An optimal material must first be chosen. If we will consider resistive bolometers Poly Si Ge is a possibility as also Vanadium Oxide. This requires optimization of the structure and the material for the required noise level. The GWU team is cooperating with other groups to decide the optimal parameters and technological variant. As to the visible wavelength sensors, 3 types of CMOS sensors will be developed and interfaced to the CNN chips.

5.3 Vertical packaging technology including flip chip and multi-chip modules with internal vias on about a 50 micron grid;

Recent advances in integrated circuit packaging promise a new level of integration in analogic CNN processor chips. Multi chip module technologies and vertical integration techniques are now hot topics when the roadmap of standard and cheap CMOS technologies approaches physical and technological limits.

The Urbana Group has a lot of experience in this field and has the know how and the cooperative arrangements to make a major advance in packaging analogic CNN processor chips to achieve a much higher density.

Unlike the Sugar cube technology of Irvine Sensors (a BMDO project), here, we need the vertical connections in the inner part of the chip, with about 50 micron or less grid size. Recent advances at Raytheon-Boeing as well as at Lucent technologies (with optical inner interconnects) will be studied as promising target technologies.

5.4 System integration on the physical level.

In addition to the vertical integration of VLSI chips, the ultra compact visual supercomputer chip assemblies need a new physical integration technology on the system level as well. The recently emerging industry standard PC104Plus board and rack technology is planned. This means that a few floppy disc size boards will be mounted together in a battery or supply operated environment. The final result will be a walkman-size unit with supercomputer processing speed and 100MHz 32 bit communication speed.

In some cases, when the fill in factor is to be increased, micro-lens technologies are to be used. Filling in the optical gaps between the focal plane sensor-computer chips when applying multi chip modules, macro-lenses are needed. The recent developments in panoramic lens technologies offer high speed target detection without any rotating units. Hence, for special purpose arrangements, micro lens and macro lens technologies will be used on about 50 micron and 10-20 mm grids, respectively, as well as panoramic lens technology will be applied for fully parallel spherical surveillance.

These optical technologies will be studied in the context of speeding up as well as increasing the reliability of multisensor target- detection and –tracking applications.

5.5 Analogic software R&D and software integration.

The architecture of the adaptive, complex cell, multi sensor and multi chip/board system offer a new ground for the algorithm and software design.

- Non-equilibrium spatio-temporal (NEST) algorithms [5] will be the norm, rather than the special case in this new environment. Research will be pursued in this direction, including active wave and pattern detection systems as algorithmic elements.
- The computational infrastructure of the analogic cellular computers should be extended to include the adaptive and learning processes in the standard software environment of the compilers and interpreters.
- The dynamic interaction of analogic cellular and standard global processing will be explored and implemented.

The Budapest group with the Berkeley group has proved to be a leader in this field, and the system prototyping is planned to be made in some of the new start-up companies.

5.6 Functional system integration and mission critical testing

At the end of both phases (Phase IIA and Phase IIB), extensive testing is to be made in real life, airborne and ground based, environments.

Studying and assessing typical application classes, one or two functionally integrated units will be assembled.

Independent evaluation by other groups selected by the contractor agency will be carried out at the end of both phases.

6. WORK PLAN, PHASES AND CONTRIBUTING PARTIES

Work Plan and Phases

This project is intended to be completed in 2 parts and 6 tasks:

Phase II A: R&D for achieving target specifications in separate chips in experimental scale.

Phase II B: Scale-up and system integration on the physical, software and functional levels.

Task and Partners	Phase II – A						Phase II - B				
	2000		2001				2002				2003
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
1. Mixed mode chip design: <u>IMSE</u> , ANCL, MRL	R		Ci	Ch		E	R		Ci	Ch	E
	0.25 μ					0.18 μ					
2. Sensors, CMOS: <u>IMSE</u> , ANCL, MEMS: <u>MRL</u> , IMSE, ANCL		R	Ci	Ch		E		R	Ci	Ch	E
			R	Ci		E		R	Ci	Ch	E
3. Packaging: <u>CSL</u> , ANCL, IMSE, MRL			R	Ci	Ch	E	R		Ci	ChE	
4. Physical Integration: ANCL, CSL			R	Ci	Ch				Ci	ChE	
5. Algorithm and Software: ANCL, NOEL			R		S	E		R		SE	
6. Functional Integration and testing: ANCL, CSL					R	E			R		E

In the quarters indicated by the columns, the following types of deliverables will be completed:

R – research report, Ci – circuit design, Ch – chip or board,
S – software, E – evaluation report

Proposed Budget (in 1000 \$):

Phases / Laboratories	Phase II – A		Phase II - B	
	2000	2001	2002	2003
ANCL	80+70 Eq	210+50 Mf	250+50 Mf	80
CSL	110+50 Eq	200+100 Mf	250+ 100 Mf	
IMSE	150+80 Eq	280+120 Mf	280 + 130 Mf	80
MRL	100+50 Eq	200+100 Mf	180 + 110 Mf	80
NOEL	50	100	100	

Mf: Manufacturing cost

Eq: Equipment cost

As a summary of costs: 2780 + 250 Eq + 760 Mfg . This means \$3790k total cost

Partners:

ANCL: Analogical and Neural Computing Systems Laboratory (ANCL) and the Neuromorphic Information Technology Postgraduate Center (NIT), Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Pazmany University, Budapest, Hungary, Prof. Tamás Roska

CSL: Coordinated Science Laboratory and the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Illinois, Urbana- Champaign, USA, Prof, Steve M. Kang

IMSE: Microelectronics Laboratory, Spanish National Research Council and the University of Seville, Seville, Spain, Prof. Ángel Rodríguez-Vázquez

MRL: MEMS Research Center, Department of Electrical Engineering, George Washington University, USA , Prof. Mona Zaghloul

NOEL: Nonlinear Electronics Laboratory, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences, University of California at Berkeley, USA, Prof. Leon O. Chua

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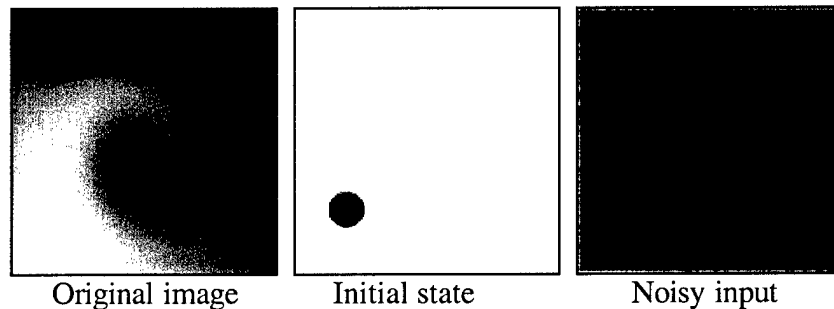
APPENDIX - EXAMPLES SHOWING QUALITATIVE ACTIONS USING COMPLEX CNN CELLS

Some detection and tracking capabilities are illustrated in this appendix. The problems are solved by using spatio-temporal algorithms running on CNN Universal Machine.

Active contour detection and tracking

Example 1 - Detecting the contour of a noisy spiral-wave

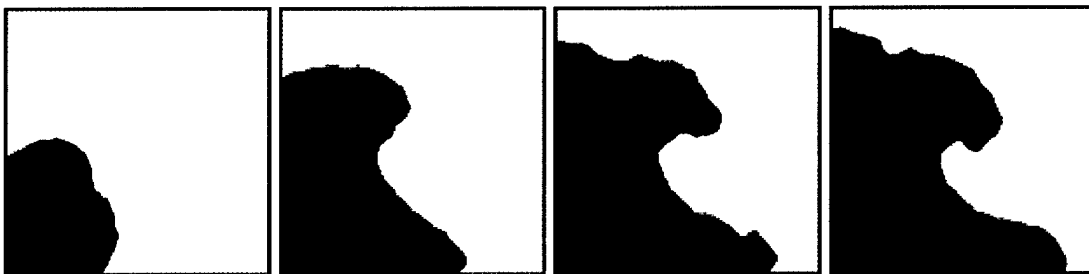
The original image (left, resolution: 64x64) is a snapshot of a rotating spiral-wave. This image was corrupted by additive Gaussian noise and the contrast degraded to create the CNN input (right). The task is to identify the contour separating the light and dark image regions. The problem is solved by a trigger-wave initiated from a patch in the light region (middle).



Consecutive snapshots from the CNN output – simple control:



Consecutive snapshots from the CNN output –adaptive control:

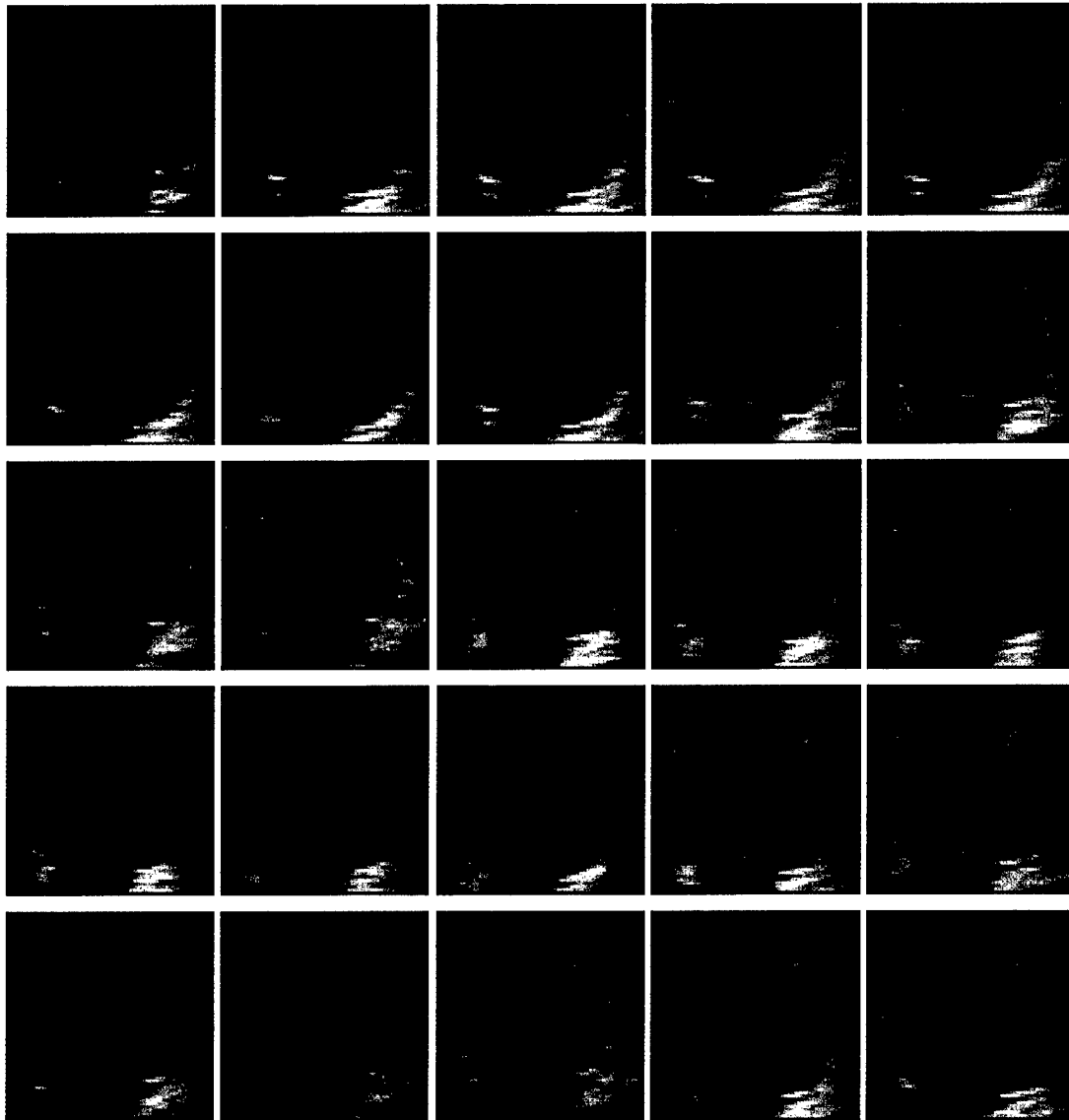


Example 2 - Tracking the contour of the left ventricle

This fundamental task of the ultrasound echocardiography is solved on a "video-flow" of the echocardiography machine. 25 typical frames (resolution: 64x64) of the left ventricle are shown bellow - supplied as the input of the CNN Universal chip.



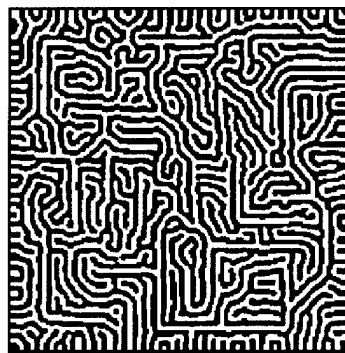
The processing results are visualized by superimposing the extracted contours onto the original images. Processing a frame takes about 250 μsec (measured result on a 64x64 CNN Universal Machine chip). The predicted time performance is about 25 $\mu\text{sec}/\text{frame}$ on a 128x128 CNN-UM chip fabricated using a 0.18-micron technology.



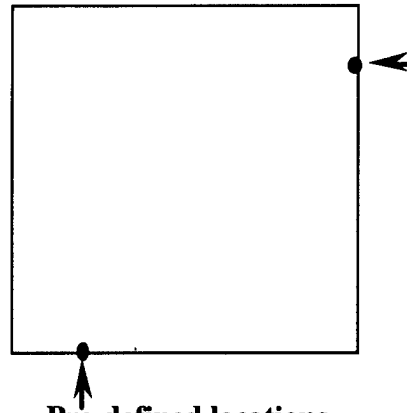
Path extraction and tracking

Example - Finding the shortest path

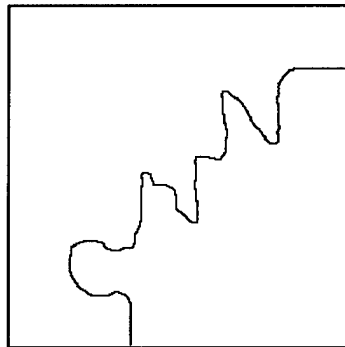
A spatio-temporal algorithm generating trigger waves is also capable of finding the shortest path in labyrinth-like landscapes in between two predefined locations. The example below illustrates this problem on a 128x128 input containing a complex path.



Complex path



Pre-defined locations

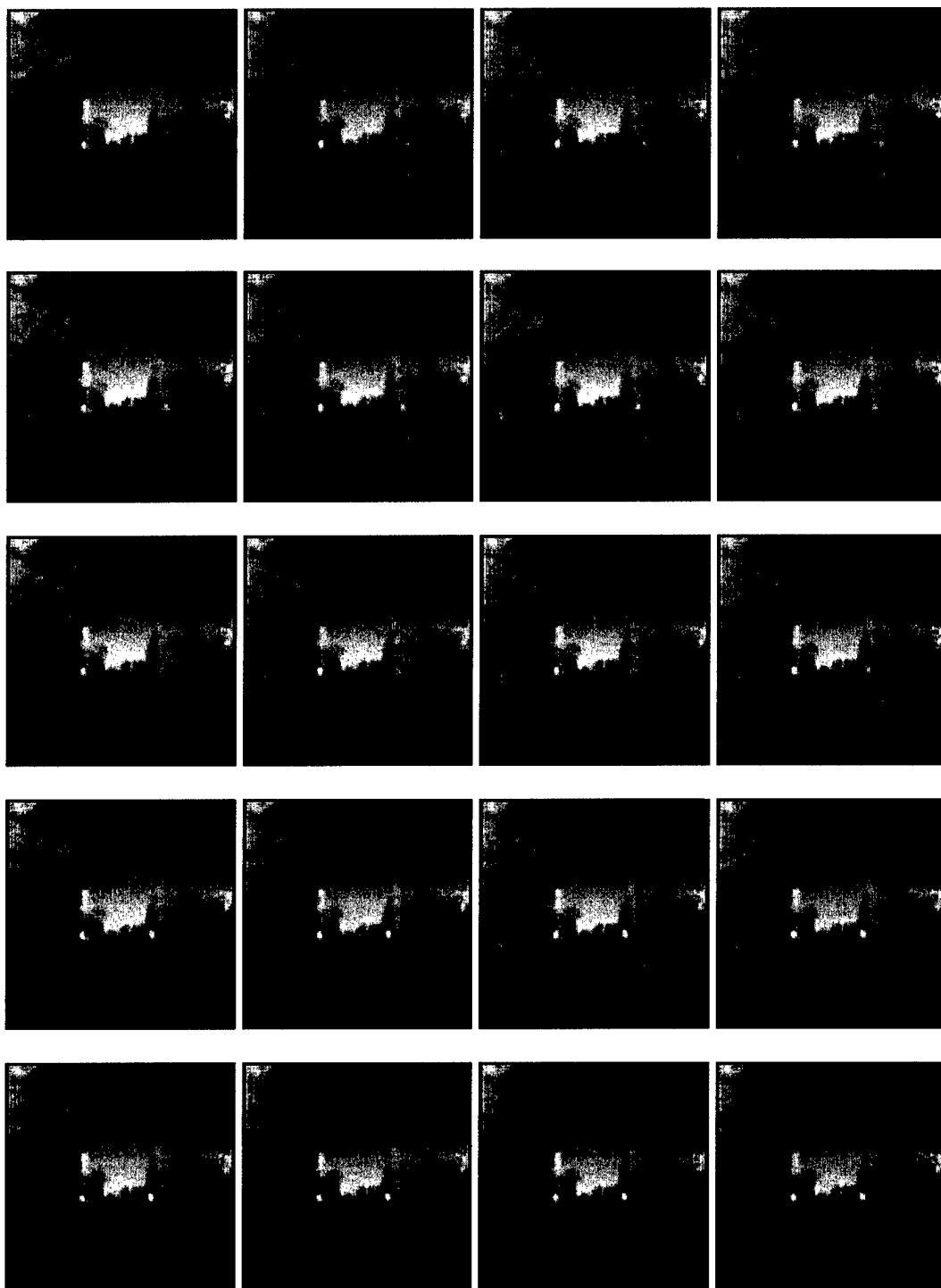


The shortest path

Target tracking

Example – Multiple-target tracking on LWIR images

The input image sequence (20 frames of resolution 128x128) is taken from an LWIR “video-flow”. The video shows two persons hiding and moving in the background. The task is to identify and track these “objects”.



Measured result on a 64x64 CNN Universal chip (the 128x128 frames were processed in blocks). The algorithm combines inter-frame analysis and spatial logic. Red – accepted detection/tracking result on the actual frame, green and yellow – detection results extracted from spatio-temporal motion, blue – prediction based on previous tracking results.

